

Tommy scores 99 by Rainy_sunshine

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Summary:

AU.

Dystopian 1980-s. All high school seniors in the USA have to take IQ test at the end of the year and those who score less than 100 are stripped off their citizenship and have to arrange moving to another country themselves or be shipped off to one of American colonies as a worthless garbage

Steve knows that he's not gonna make it. Robin knows that. Dustin knows that, too. There is nothing Steve can do about it, though

1. 1

Author's Note:

Warning: Period-typical homophobia, homophobic language

Tommy scores 99. Carol, 101.

That was a close call, and Steve is somewhat happy for the assholes, he really is. Despite the fact that they haven't talked to him in months.

Fortunately, he himself has a government-issued document that gives him rights to postpone his own exam for a year.

So he does just that - postpones the inevitable. Pretends he is fine. Gets a job in Family video and watches tons of weird European movies with Robin.

Goes to parties. Drives with Robin to Indy to spend time in the "Don't tell my Mom" club and ends up getting a blowjob from a bulky guy in his thirties in a bathroom stall while blushing, giggling Robin dances with a bunch of smoking-hot girls. She can't dance for shit and it's almost painful to watch, but Steve can tell that she's having the time of her life when he himself emerges from the restrooms in a post-orgasmic bliss and clouds of weed smoke.

The experience both is and isn't life shattering. He kind of had already suspected that he wasn't totally straight. He is, like, straight-ish? A nice pair of tits really gets him going. But, like, a muscular ass and wide shoulders sometimes do too? Not all the time, mind you. But. Sometimes. When he is really horny. And he is often horny because he is a red-blooded American male, so. Sue him.

Not that it would matter much in a year if he's queer or not. He's already a disappointment for his parents and Hawkins High' failure of the decade.

Unless some smart girl or guy are willing to marry him on the spot

he'd have to move countries. Go down to one of the American's colonies in South America, probably. He'd have six months after his test results would be announced to figure it out on his own before the government breaks down the door to his house and ships him off like a garbage. They don't let dumb people who score less than 100 pollute the air of the land of the free.

And what smart person would want to take dumb Steve Harrington as a spouse? Not that there are many people who are willing to get married at 18 anyway. Tommy and Carol are the exception that proves the rule, destined for each other since kindergarten. It's Tommy's luck, really, to get a smarter - but not too smarter - girlfriend, so that together they'd get the minimum average of 100 points per person for a couple. Still not enough to let them move to a bigger city like they had dreamt about, but at least they would be able to settle in Hawkins or any other small town with a population less than 5 000.

Anyway. Steve parties like there is no tomorrow. Goes to his shifts in Family Video red-eyed and hangover. Bickers with Robin and Hargrove who seems to have nothing better to do than visit Family Video to give Steve shit. Insensitive asshole. Talks about the test and how there is no way Steve is going to score more than 75. Like, fuck him. Robin is doing her best in training him, so he is hoping for 85 at the very least. Maybe as high as 90, even.

Once, he cries in the bathroom after Billy leaves. It's just - it's hard. Half the time he is stoned out of his mind but it's still - dreadful. His future.

Moving away from his friends, family, his house and everything he knows is scary. Living the rest of his life in a foreign land... he's too dumb to even imagine it in any details. It's just - awful.

His future lies in front of him like a long grey *nothing*.

- Harrington, - says someone and two hands grab him from behind, turn him around. - The fuck are you crying about? It's not like your girlfriend would abandon you after the test, right? Buckley is pretty smart too, she might get a 125, easily. You don't need the smarts, pretty boy, just go on being pretty.

- Shit you are so dumb, - Steve mumbles through the tears. - She's not my girlfriend, asshole. She has a girl - fuck, fuck! Fuck you. Just - she's not.

And that's how Steve gets his second blowjob from a male. One minute Hargrove is giving him shit, the next one he's kissing his tear-streaked cheeks like a grandma. And then the *next* one he grabs his junk, smirks and falls on his knees. Steve is still pissed at the bastard but he's, like, suddenly really horny? It may be the weed. Watching pink tongue wetting plush lips, sure hands unzipping his jeans and those pretty eyes giving his dick a quick nod of appreciation kind of warms his insides.

Steve knows that he has a nice dick. Really if they had a test on dicks his chances of getting a high score would be pretty good. Hargrove swallows his dick like a world's tastiest (dick-shaped) candy and starts slurping around him, shameless in the bright neon light of the bathroom. Steve still can hear Keith's voice from the outside talking to someone, though he can't make out exact words. Hargrove pinches his ass cheek like a bastard and sucks *hard*.

- Hargrove, oh - shit, shit I'm gonna come, - he hisses to the blue-eyed asshole at his feet. Enthusiastic sucking intensifies and that's it, Steve spills down blonde's throat in the next millisecond.

- Consider it an apology, - says Hargrove, sitting on his heels.

Steve can't even.

Time flies by.

In March, two months after the Family video blowjob, Billy appears on Steve's front porch close to midnight with a six-pack and a cheap line. Goes: "Heard your parents are never home; lonely much, Harrington?" and something about giving Steve *the workout of his life*, and five minutes later they fuck on the couch in the living room, Steve on his back, Hargrove riding him, tight like a glove, silky-smooth, breathing fast and hot, his annoying smirk quickly replaced by expression of total bliss (to Steve's inner smugness), and Steve keeps sucking bruises on his neck and shoulders while fucking into him hard and deep with all the desperation that only someone who soon is going to lose everything he had ever known can have.

Billy falls asleep right after he comes and wakes Steve up in the middle of the night for round two. Gets on his hands and knees and wiggles his ass like a shameless flirt he is. It's a nice ass. Great ass, actually. Steve just knows that he's going to miss it next year LIKE HELL while working as a - a janitor, probably - in - in Argentina. Or somewhere. In Mexico. Dustin tried to make him look into various countries that the US government has agreement with, the countries that let former American citizens who failed their IQ tests move into them. Scandinavian countries, Dustin told him, are probably better for people like him than South America. The commies there, like, take great care of their dummies. But Steve got so depressed with just one look at the map that they never moved further from "A".

Fuck his life. He doesn't want to think about it. Shit. He doesn't want to think about shit either. Although, Hargrove came obviously fully washed and prepared. Desperate much, huh?

Shit Hargrove is so hot. Fucking him feels so great. Despite his asshole personality. Or, like, maybe exactly because of it. He lines up and presses inside, the now-familiar warmth enveloping his dick, Hargrove going pliant and weak in the knees underneath him, so that he has to put both pillows under his belly. They fuck slow, kind of sweet, if a bit torturous, and Steve is trying to remember the exact curves of Billy's spine, presses his hand down on Hargrove's neck, making him hiss and round his back, taking Steve deeper. Hargrove is a fantastic lay, and when Steve gets a little rough, pulling his hair, he comes untouched and whoops like crazy. Yeah, Steve is definitely going to miss this.

He wakes up in the morning to an empty house and a yellow piss in the toilet. Fucking bastard obviously thought it was hilarious not to wash after himself.

They fuck again the next week, and then again two weeks after that.

- So, are you and Hargrove a thing? - asks Robin once, and Steve laughs bitter and loud. It's not like he doesn't know that Billy hooked up with Stella Morrison at a party just a few days ago. Really, Hargrove made sure that everybody at the party was acquainted with the fact.

He and Robin drive to Indy again in early May and Hargrove gets inexplicably mad about it when he finds out later. They don't talk much to each other after that.

At the end of May, Robin scores 134. Steve gets 92.

2. Chapter 2

It's raining on Monday.

An hour before closing Tammy Thompson comes to "Family video" with puffy eyes and has a torturous talk with Steve about her test results. She's gotten 107 points, so he doesn't truly feel sorry for her, but he nods and hums in all the right places the whole time Tammy talks about how unfortunate she was to misspell something on her paper - "it was a typo, not a real mistake", she insists. It's just that the world's a cruel and unfair place, and Steve "has to know that she would've given her everything to get her a better grade".

Somewhere in the middle of her rant Billy comes in, dressed in his red shirt and the tightest pair of jeans, noisily stomps around, pays Robin for his videotape and leaves without a glance at Steve.

Tammy goes on talking about how her life is ruined.

Yeah, whatever. It's hard to be compassionate considering Steve's own results. He would've been ecstatic to get 107. Maybe the problem is that Thomson wanted to move to Nashville but can't do so with the test results less than 110? It must be it. Nashville's population is probably bigger than half a million... or a million, he's never been there and never thought about Nashville until right now. Standing behind the counter in Family video in Hawkins at 5 p.m. Also the city might be on the National Treasure Cities list, in which case she'd need even higher scores to move there... By the way, is he going to spend his last american months in Hawkins? Should he try and see more of the country? Maybe visit the fucking Nashville? God, he's pathetic. Anyhow, even if he gets why she's so upset it still hurts to listen to her complaining to *him* of all people. Isn't it - insensitive, yeah, that's the word - to make him comfort her? At least she gets to stay in her native country and doesn't have to move to some foreign land. Come December and where would Steve be? In fucking Sweden if Dustin has his way, delivering pizza or - or whatever the hell they eat up there, who knows if they even have delivery services in Sweden...

"Tammy, Tammy, stop, - he says. - Look at me. You are a great

person, you know? You'll go far in life. You are going to have a great life, you hear me?"

She starts sobbing uncontrollably, squeaks: "You are such a good person, Steve!" and leaves without renting any tapes. Keith gives Steve the stink eye.

Robin is weirdly silent the rest of their shift, and when later he invites her over to watch a movie together she shortly declines. He drives home alone, water flowing down the windshield in streams, and kind of - just stares forward without any thoughts, and then out of the corner of his eye - suddenly some movement in the dark, and he hits the brake with heart beating in his throat. It's difficult to see through the rain this heavy but he's sure he had noticed something that didn't belong there.

His eyes catch some movement again, and now his attention is on the trash can near the closed hairdresser's. There is something small and grey-ish hiding behind it, and Steve sighs and opens the door to go check what it is. He can't let another stray baby-demodog wander the streets of Hawkins, now can he? Carefully he approaches the trash bin, his bat in his right hand, only to find a small kitten, drenched to the skin and shivering in the light of the flashlight. In a second the kitten high-tails it away from Steve, and Steve spends the next half an hour chasing the poor bastard around the neighborhood.

Billy's Camaro is parked in front of the house in Loch Nora, and judging by the light on the first floor Hargrove has used the key from under the flowerpot that he had no right of knowing was there to get inside and make himself comfortable. And just like that, despite his tiredness, for the first time today Steve suddenly feels alive. Excitement, anticipation and fear are all bubbling inside him like water in a kettle. What's Hargrove up to? Did he come for a fuck or a fight? The moment Steve steps on the porch Billy opens the door, blinding Steve with light, and goes "Where the hell have you been, Harrington? Huh?".

As if Steve owns him an answer. Hargrove hasn't talked to him in *weeks*.

He probably came today to brag about his stellar test results. Not because he missed Steve.

Steve did miss him, though... if he is being honest with himself about

his feelings, which he doesn't want to be.

He hugs the kitten tighter, feeling the water dripping from his hair, his eyelashes wet, and after a second he is pulled inside, the door closing behind him. When he opens his eyes, Hargrove is looking at him with a strange expression.

"I gotta say, you never cease to impress me, Harrington", he drawls. "What is it? Your new charity project? Give it to me, you prick, and go to the bathroom, you're gonna get pneumonia."

"You are not my Mom", mumbles Steve, and Hargrove snorts and says "you don't have a Mom", which, ouch, rude much?

"You know there is no virtue in saving strays, right?", asks Hargrove, and Steve wittily says "debatable" but puts the kitten in question on the floor. It darts across the foyer to the kitchen door and hides under a cupboard.

"Go take a fucking shower", says Hargrove again and gives him a hefty shove in the wrong direction. "I'll find some milk. Christ. Do you even have milk, you moron."

It's pretty funny, Hargrove grumbling like an old man, and Steve snickers and shuffles to the master bedroom to take shower in his parents' bathroom. He spends there fifteen blissful minutes. Which would've been even more blissful had Billy joined him there.

Hargrove is being weird. Judging by the their previous encounters Steve had all reasons to expect them to be fucking by now, but when he emerges from the shower Billy is in the main room scowling at the phone. There is a half-empty bowl of milk on the floor near the kitchen door but the kitten is nowhere to be seen.

"Harrington, why do you have two missed calls from a doctor? Is something wrong with you? Why'd you have an answering machine if you don't check the calls?"

The puzzled look on Steve's face makes Billy scowl even harder and then he presses a button and the room is filled with the dry voice of doctor Owen.

"Mr Harrington, you have missed your appointment by two weeks. Do I need to remind you what the consequences of your forgetfulness are? Please don't make my job any harder than it already is. Call me back."

"Or else", he doesn't say, but Steve can hear it loud and clear.

It's like Steve is stuck in a B-rated sci-fi apocalypse movie on top of being an unlucky hero in a coming-of-age comedy. Is it just him or was Owen really threatening to send people to murder him? Billy's gaze alternates between Steve's face and the answering machine.

"Wanna tell me what's going on, you idiot?"

And Steve just can't. He had signed dozens of NDAs.

Also he's tired of people not talking to him for weeks and of people calling him idiot.

He isn't even horny anymore, doctor fucking Owen has managed to kill all the anticipation that was building in him while he was in the shower. He laughs, bitter and cruel.

"It's none of your business, Billy", he answers softly. "Go bug someone else".

He's so fucking tired of bullshit.

Later he is in his room. Lying in his bed, still only in a towel, looking at the gray ceiling. He refused to talk to Billy. They didn't even make out which is a bummer. A shitty ending to a shitty day. He is absolutely resolute in his decision not to talk to doctor Owen either. What's the point? Steve is leaving the country anyway, going overseas for good. He is never again to see his friends. Dustin promises to visit, but in a year Steve would be nothing but a sweet childhood memory to him. Steve is under no illusion that Robin. Or Billy, huh. Would remember him long enough to wonder what is happening to him in a year or two.

He is an idiot, after all. Nobody cares about idiots.

Billy breaks something downstairs and finally leaves, slamming the door on his way out.

3. Chapter 3

“This is truly unfortunate”, mutters Dr Owens under his breath.
“Please”, whispers Steve. “It almost sounds like you care”.

Earlier, he woke up with a stuffy nose and a terrible headache. He could feel the heat radiating off his face, his eyeballs were painful to move, and when he exhaled it felt like he was breathing fire. His sheets were drenched in sweat. Dizziness made him grab for the bedframe when he tried to stand, but he missed it by a few inches and ended up slumping onto the bed again. The ceiling was slowly rotating. It took him three attempts to stand upright and get to the bathroom to take a piss.

He dropped the medkit, fished some aspirin from under the sink, dry swallowed two pills and sat on the floor trying to gather enough strength for the long and winding road back to the bedroom. In moments like this loneliness was really getting to him. He thought about Billy, who sometimes stayed the night - in the beginning - but always left before the sunrise. He would've been gone by now anyway.

When he came to it was to a piercing shrill of the phone ringing downstairs. Shivering, he tried to stand up, and found himself sitting in the same position some time later, only now with a slightly irritated Dr Owens shaking him by the shoulders.

“Mister Harrington”, he was saying. “Have you taken something?”

There was probably irony in the fact that it was a shady government doctor worrying about him instead of a parent or a girlfriend - or, or a boyfriend. Steve wasn't very sure what irony was. Robin once tried to explain it to him but it turned out that anything could be ironic to her, and he ended up feeling more confused than he had been before she started the explanation.

“The world is one big joke”, she summarized, shrugging.

“Drink this”, says Owens in his perfectly warm and friendly doctor's voice, pushing a glass of pink water in Steve's face. He drinks

obediently and after a few unpleasant minutes where his shivering intensifies tenfold regains some ability to communicate with Owens in complete sentences. They move to the living room, and Steve knows he is doomed to stay the night on the couch since getting up to his bedroom after Owens leaves is out of the question.

“So”, says Owens, “I see you have a pet now. Any story behind it?”.

Steve wonders if the milk went sour overnight. Remembers that Billy had used his Mother’s precious Japanese donburi as a cat bowl and smiles weakly.

“Steve?”

There is no reason to hide the cat from Owens, so he retells the events of the previous evening, diligently circumventing the subject of Billy Hargrove. Owens hums thoughtfully.

“Was it raining?”

“Yeah?”

“Was it raining?”

“I mean, yes”.

“So you were driving home - was it dark already?”

“Why?”

“Just asking. Was it?”

“Yeah?”

“Are you not certain?”

“Yeah, yeah it was. Why?”

Owens hums some more.

“Interesting. What are you going to do with the cat now?”

Steve is trying really hard to be polite - it’s easier, with Owens, who has a way of slithering around any sharp edges in a discussion - but the man has so many fucking questions it’s exhausting. At some point Owens disappears “to make some calls” and Steve must’ve fallen asleep because Owens is shaking him awake yet again, asking about his plans for the future.

“Sweden”, says Steve solemnly and doesn’t elaborate. His head is killing him.

Owen gets him another drink.

”Just - leave me alone, would you? I’m tired”, Steve all but whines. He’s sick and miserable, so. Sue him for wanting some peace and quiet.

"Just a few more things. I was saying - It was dark and raining, and that corner off Main where you said you found the cat doesn't have a street light".

"You think I'm lying..."

"I don't. I think your reaction time is impressive. See, Steve, I've always thought that our approach on IQ-testing of high school students was inherently flawed. We are throwing away people who might be talented in fields other than formal logic or reading."

"I'm not that good at sports either", Steve says bitterly. "Billy is better".

"Billy? Hargrove, I presume? He is a very athletic boy indeed. Are you two friends?"

For a moment Steve is considering telling Owens the truth but that will cause a new bunch of questions from the man and also it's not like it's entirely *his* story to tell, so instead he mumbles "kinda" and closes his eyes. Headache is still present, though at this point it has become bearable.

"Anything else you want to tell me? Any odd encounters? Weird stuff?"

"No. Listen, can you leave? Please? I thought the torture was prohibited by law".

"I'm not torturing you. I found you all by yourself with a temperature above 100F. What I intend to do is nurse you back to health, so to speak. Do you feel better?"

"Yes", sighs Steve resignedly.

"See, I'm not the bad guy. I'm on your side. Now, I know you are feeling sick but once you're feeling better I'd like to run some tests on you. Would it be okay? Just answer this one thing and I'd leave".

Sweden is looking better with every minute. One thing Steve doesn't want for sure is becoming Owens' lab rat.

"Nothing intrusive, I promise. Just say yes. It's for science and it'll only take a few hours that you'd be reimbursed for. Don't you want to know how you've managed to survive not one but two encounters with creatures from another world while trained soldiers in full gear had not?"

It is always hard for Steve to say “no” to an authority figure - he's not smart enough to tell whether he's in the right or not. He's pretty sure, though, that Owens has no right to be in his house torturing him with questions when Steve is sick out of his mind. But well, only a few hours and a reimbursement sounds tempting.

“Okay, - he says. - Whatever. Can you leave now?”

It's turning dark outside. His shift has started, like, hours ago. Keith is probably going to fire his ass.

“Are they... painful, - he asks, - The tests?”

Owens smiles sweetly.

“Why, not at all”.

He jerks awake later to someone shouting his name in a high-pitched voice, and opens the door to find Dustin standing on the porch with a huge backpack and a thermos. The kid starts talking the second he sees Steve.

“Oh wow, Steve, you look awful, how do you feel? Your nose is twice the size, buddy! And red, too! Mom sends you this chicken broth. You need to rest and drink as much liquid as you can, I can do it myself - oops, shit, hope it wasn't your favorite mug?”

“Language”, Steve coughs automatically.

“So Robin called Max to say that you called in sick today and she didn't have time to come and check on you, obviously, since she had to work double, therefore she asked Max if someone can go check on you, so Max radioed The Party and now here I am, you knight in the shining armour! Yours most trusted brother in arms! It might be really hot, drink carefully, okay?”

Robin is one cunning scheming fox, that's for sure. It's obvious that she, for whatever reason, is more invested in his relationship with Billy than Billy himself is. But joke's on her since Hargrove hasn't bothered to show up.

Steve feels a prick of regret so sharp and sudden that it has his eyes watering.

“I told you it's hot!” Dustin squeaks, “Shit, Steve, does it hurt? Want some water?”

“Language”, Steve sighs.

He was too blunt with Hargrove yesterday, now that he had time to think about it. Billy didn't owe him a thing. He was not obliged to care for Steve's feelings. He came for a quick fix, that's all there was to it. Ever since they'd discovered that Steve was bi it was only a convenient arrangement for both of them. Not like there are lots of queer boys in Hawkins. People still frown at queers even if it is considered the new normal now.

Steve spends the next day alone, slowly recovering. Dustin took the kitten home with him, so there is not much to do, and he lays on the couch for hours watching day shows and thinking about Billy. If he and Robin were not both gay they'd make a great couple. Both their test results were incredible. Same as Nancy's. What's with him being dumb as a rock and falling for smart people? Not like he is in love with Billy, thank fuck, but if he's not careful... Billy is easy to like. Easy to fall for, even, despite his asshole behaviour. Luckily for Steve he is moving to Sweden in a month, no time to get his heart broken third time this year. He cries a little thinking about how *lucky* he is. His nose probably gets three times bigger than normal after that.

Somewhere during the evening it starts raining again and Steve falls asleep with the TV still on.

It's not until the next day when he's back to work, still with a headache and a red nose that reminds Robin of Robin The Reindeer that he sees Billy again, obviously right after his shift in the garage judging by his greasy hands and a smudge of oil on his forehead. Steve goes straight to the storage room and stays there for half an hour rewinding the tapes.

It's too much. Everything is too fucking much. His face is a mess, his nose looks awful. Time is running out. He probably needs to start packing soon.

"What do you want me to do, Buckley? Huh? Fucking marry him? Why don't you do it yourself?" - is what he hears when he peeks outside to see if Hargrove is gone.